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COMOR-D-13/39

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2 March 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR: Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance  
SUBJECT: Sea Surveillance by Earth Satellite Vehicles

The attached memorandum submitted by the Navy is concerned with use of the [redacted] and is forwarded for information and comment. It is planned to discuss this in a restricted session at COMOR on 11 March. It will be the last item on the agenda and will be limited, of course, to those with the [redacted] project clearance.

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[redacted]  
Executive Secretary  
Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

Attachment  
Navy Subject Paper

|                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| Copies 2, 3    | State TCO      |
| 4              | DIA [redacted] |
| 5, 6, 7, 8     | DIA TCO        |
| 9, 10          | OACSI TCO      |
| 11, 12         | ONI TCO        |
| 13, 14, 15, 16 | AFNIN TCO      |
| 17, 18         | NSA TCO        |
| 19, 20, 21     | (S) NRO TCO    |

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*recalled  
8 March 1965*

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1 March 1965

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From: Navy Member, Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance  
To: Chairman, Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

Subject: Sea Surveillance by Earth Satellite Vehicles

1. Navy and Air Force personnel and the (S) NRO for some time have been studying problems of world-wide sea surveillance. (S) NRO has concluded that it is feasible to contribute to sea surveillance by earth satellite vehicles, and that necessary capabilities should be incorporated into [redacted] Program, which was recently placed under the jurisdiction of the (S) NRO. Before the (S) NRO expends (TS) NRP funds for further development and adaptation of capability for sea surveillance, the intelligence requirement for such a capability must receive USIB approval.

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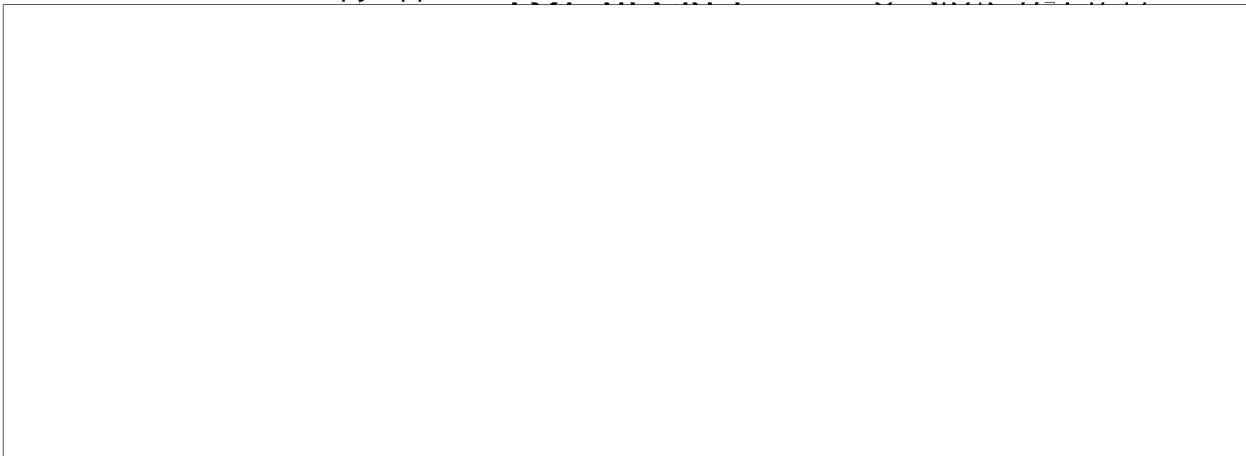
2. While the general threat from missile launching submarines and surface ships at sea is easy to recognize, there are also other national intelligence requirements for current position and identification data on other ships and craft engaged in military, intelligence collection, or clandestine activities. Under conditions of cold war the movement of such less obviously identifiable threats may be of particular national and military concern because they may be indicators. The extensive operations to locate and identify Soviet missile-transporting merchant ships enroute to Cuba in the summer of 1962, and subsequent efforts to report on suspect arms carriers elsewhere in the world illustrate national intelligence requirements for effective sea surveillance.

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4. While this requirement is essentially national, it should be noted that the position, movements, and identity of all ships and submarines in a particular area also has major tactical significance. Expeditious collection and dissemination of such tactical data do however determine the effectiveness of forces in entire theaters of operations, and have major strategic consequences. This requirement should be regarded as both of strategic and tactical importance.

5. For the information of COMOR, it is estimated that a satellite surveillance system to contribute to satisfaction of these requirements calls for extensive technical capabilities. Effective sea surveillance of maritime targets which can be positioned over two thirds of the earth's surface, and move unpredictably within their speed capabilities, may require means for rapid, repeated, all-weather, night-or-day location and identification of seaborne surface and subsurface targets, to distinguish specific targets of interest from among the many ships and craft at sea. Without prejudging, (S) NRO considers such a system might include:



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- b. Processing and command/communications equipment;
- c. Compatibility with data processing systems to permit rapid analysis and transmission of intelligence to users.

6. Since a sea surveillance requirement involves such a specific combination of elements, since so few persons have access to [redacted] and since (S) NRO can proceed with planned action as soon as the requirement is approved, it is recommended COMOR submit this requirement to USIB at the earliest opportunity, and not attempt to present it with other long range requirements.

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signed



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NRO

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22 TSO CIA  
23 [REDACTED]  
24-33 Asst Ops/NPIC  
34 Special Center TCO  
35, 36 CGS  
37, 38 CIA COMOR Member  
39 CGS ReqBr/ReconGrp  
40 Ch/COMOR Wkg Grp  
41 AD/SI  
42 DDP TCO  
43 DDS&T TCO [REDACTED]  
44 C/Action/DDS&T  
45 SAS/DDS&T [REDACTED]  
46 AD/EL  
47 AD/SA  
48 FA/OSA  
49 ID/OSA  
50 SS/OSA  
51 SAL/OSA  
52-55 SA(COMOR)/DDS&T

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